A 1375

RELATION

Of the fearfull

ESTATE

OF

FRANCIS SPIRA.

In the Year, 1548.

Compyled by *Nath. Bacon*, Esq.

The back-slider in heart shall be filled with his own ways, Prov. 14. 14.

GLASGOW,
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A PREFACE.

FOr truth of this *Hiſtory* enſuing, beſides circumſtances of place, perſon, time, occaſion ſo exactly obſerved: I refer my ſelf to the relation of thoſe godly men, who in ſeverall Languages have manifeſted to the world the ſeverall paſſages thereof: And although I am not ignorant that at the firſt they were not only credited, but alſo diſcredited and ſlandered by ſuch as found them to be a blur Romane Profeſſion, yet they loſt not their luſter thereby; but being acquitted by many Compurgators of ſeverall Nations, and ſome of the Romiſh Religion, being all of them ſpectators of this Tragedy, it occaſioned not only a further manifeſtation and confirmation of the truth, but alſo a large and more frequent confluence, to ſee that which they had formerly only heard of. This partly appeareth out of the ſucceeding ſtory, but more fully out of an Apology writen by Vergerius Biſhop of Juſtinople, who was accuſed for diſperſing the ſame of this example to the ſtain of Popery, in which Apology to N. R. Suffragant of Padua, it ſhortly and plainly declared what was ſaid, what was done, and who were preſent. If that it be demanded, what moved me to compile this Treatiſe, Spira, tell them that it ſhould teach fear and reverence, and indeed among all thoſe that come to ſee him, few or none returns unſhaken. Vergerius in his firſt Epiſtle

to fear and tremble: And in his Apology saith, It is such a rare example, as I would willingly go to the furthest parts of the world to hear or see the like. The Lady Jane to her Fathers Chaplain, that had fallen into Spira's sin, saith, Remember the Lamentable share of Spira. I acknowledge that there hath been formerly a Book published in our Mother tongue, concerning this subject, but as far as I can learn (for I could never yet obtain any of them) it was nothing so large and various as this present Treatise, and as I have heard, a translation of only one of the Treatises from whence I have gathered this present discourse in part. Concerning my care and fidelity in this business, it is such as I may truly say without changing of colour, that there is not one sentence of all it is Wrot attributed unto the person of Spira, but it hath its warrant, either from the Epistles of Vergerius and Gribaldus, Professors of the Law at Padua, or from the discourses Henry Scringer a Scottish man, Sigismund Gelous a Transilvanian and Mars. Bucha a Divine of Basile, neither have I taken any other liberty then as a relation to weave the several discourses one within another, so as those which under several Writers were before counted several, are now by my endeavours, reduced into one intire History, pursued by the succession of time and occasion as punctually as could be aimed at, by the circumstances noted in the Writings of those holy and learned men before named.

To

To the AUTHOR and READER of this History.

SOme scattered parcels of this Story lay
In forraign Papers, which had not found a way
Thus to collect, { had } been obvious prey,
{ never seen the day.

Reader would'st see how sinning against the light
Will quench, and leave the soul in a sad night
Of discontents: Come hither, Reader then look here.
And learn light quenching sins to fear.

Reader would'st see the comfort breathing Spirit
To grieve, What cursedlesse grief it doth demerite?
Come hither then, look here.

Here see a soul that's all, despair, a man
All hell, a spirit all one wound: who can
A wounded spirit bear?

Reader would'st see, what mayest then never see',
Despairs, racks, tortures, whips of burning steel?
Come then, look here.

Behold this man this furnace, in whose heart
Sin hath created Hells. Oh, in each part
What flames appear!

his breath.

His sighs flames, wishes curses, life a death:
A thousand deaths live in him, he not dead,
A breathing coarse in living scalding lead:
And yet he lives our Monument, to tell
How black are quenched light;
Quenched joyes are double frights,
Black dayes are double nights;
Heaven tasted, lust a double hell.

I have call'd thee Reader, pray so be,
Read this, that others read not thee.
Legas Historiam,
Ne fias Historia.

M. N.

Extr

EXtraordinary Examples of divine Juſtice, God never intended for a nine dayes wonder, elſe would he, when he exemplified *Lot*'s Wife, having turned her into a ſtatue of melting ſnow, not of laſting ſalt; which ſtood, as *Joſephus* tells us, till his age, after the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*; and as ſome Travellers report, till at this day, *Ut quodam hominibus præſtaret condimentum, quo ſapiant unde illud caveatur exemplum: Aug. de civit. Dei, lib.* 16. *Cap.* 30. for a ſeaſon againſt corruption, a preſervative againſt Apoſtacy. This Tragedy, when freſh and new was the converſion and confirmation of ſundry Worthies, *Vergerius* a daily ſpectator thereof forſaking a rich Biſhoprick of *Juſtinopolis*, and rents of Antichriſt, went to *Baſile* and died a worthy Proteſtant; Many Nations had eye-witneſſes of their own Students then in the Univerſity of *Padua*, who penned the Story, the Copies whereof are frequently revived; our Engliſh ones were very defective, and now worn out of ſhops and hands; ſundry Manuſcripts of this abroad imperfect, which moved me to compare this labour of a worthy Gentleman (who faithfully tranſlated it out of *Italian*, *French* and *Dutch* Letters) with the *Latine* of *Celius Secundus*, *Curio*, *Matthæus Gribauldus*, Profeſſors

[illegible] the civil Law in *Padua*: *Sigismund Ge-*
lenius, a *Transilvanian*, *Henricus Scotus*, all daily visitors of *Spira*, and find it accord with them touching *Spira's* person, I find most learned Writers do incline to the right and hopefull hand; moved by his sweet, humble and charitable speeches, some few desperate ones excepted that fell from him in some little agonies which kept him fasting and watching about six months space, eating nothing but what was forced down his throat. The summe of *Calvins* and *Borrhaus* their counsels is, * that all learn to take heed of backsliding, which Gods soul abhors, and not to dally with Conscience, and hell on earth, if justly incensed more to be feared then the Spanish inquisition or all the Strappadoes and torments in the world and to take heed of *Spira's* principall errors. Which were, to dispute with Sathan over busily in time of weaknesse, especially to reason, and conclude from present sense, to Gods past reprobation, and future damnation: Both which is hard, if possible, for any man to determine in his own, much more in others cases; So commending thee to his grace, who is able to establish thee to the end: I bid thee farewel, and hope well, while the space of grace lasteth, *Dum Spiras, Spira*; so mayest thou take good and no hurt by the reading of this terrible Example.

* *Who wait largely of the use of this pattern.*

A

A RELATION Of the fearfull ESTATE of *Francis Spira*.

IN the year, 1548. when the glorious Sun of the Gospel was but newly risen in Europe, in the dayes of the reign of *Edward* the sixth of that name, King of *England*, in the Territory, and under the Jurisdiction of the City of *Venice*, being the very border of *Italy*, in the Town of *Cittadella*, lived one *Francis Spira*, a civil Lawyer, an Advocate of great rank and esteem, being of known learning and eloquence, of great experience, of carriage circumspect and severe, his speech grave and composed, his countenance sharp and austere, every way befitting that authority whereunto he was advanced: Endued with outward blessings, of Wife and eleven Children, and wealth in abundance: What his worst parts were, I have no

no other warrant then his owne words, which (if not tainted overmuch with the bitternesse of a desperate mind, and bearing a countenance rather of passion then of sober confession) may seem to add a period to all further commendations.

I was (saith he) *exceedingly covetous of money, and accordingly I applyed my self to get by injustice, corrupting justice by deceit, inventing tricks to delude justice; Good causes I either defended deceitfully, or sold them to the adversary perfidiously; Ill causes I maintained with all my might; I wittingly opposed the known truth, and the trust committed unto me, I either betrayed or perverted.* Thus having worn out forty four years, or thereabouts, and the news of the new or rather newly revived opinions of *Luther* coming into those parts, represented an object of novelty unto him; who being as desirous to know, as he was famous for knowledge, suffered not these wandering opinions to passe unexamined: But searching into the Scriptures, and into all Books of controversie that he could get, both old and new, and finding more then fame or opinion, he began to taste their nature so well, as he entertains, loves, and ownes them at length and with such zeal, as he became a Professor; yea, a teacher of them, first to his wife, Children, and Family, and after to his Friends and familiar acquaintance, and in comparison,

pariſon, ſeem'd to neglect all other affairs; intending ever to preſſe this main point, that *We muſt wholly and only depend on the free and unchangeable love of God in the death of Chriſt, as the only ſure way to ſalvation*: And this was the ſumme of all his diſcourſe, and this continued for the ſpace of ſix years, or thereabouts, even ſo long as this fire could keep it ſelf within private walls, but at length it brake forth into publick meetings, ſo as the whole Province of *Padua* dawned by the luſtre thereof. The Clergy finding the trade of their pardons to decay, and their Purgatory to wax cold, began to beſtir themſelves, gloſing their actions, firſt, with calumnious aſperſions upon the whole Profeſſion: Then more plainly ſtriking at *Spira* with grievous accuſations, and to effect their purpoſe, ſome promiſes labour, others favour, ſome advice, others maintenance; all joyn to divide either his ſoul from his body, or both from God.

Now was *John Caſa* the Popes Legate, reſident at *Venice*, being by birth a *Florentine*, and one that wanted neither malice againſt thoſe of this way, nor craftineſſe to effect his malicious purpoſes. To him theſe men repair with outcries againſt *Spira*, that he was the man that condemned the received rights of the Church, deluded the Eccleſiaſticall power, and ſcandalized the policy thereof; one of no mean rank

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being a man of account and authority and therefore learned in the Scriptures, elegant in speech, and in one word, a dangerous *Lutheran*, having also many disciples, and therefore not to be displeased.

At this began the *Legate* to cast his eye on the terrible alteration that lately had hapned in *Germany* where, by the means of one only *Luther*, the Romish Religion had suffered such a blow, as that it could neither be cured by dissimulation, nor defended by power, but the Clergy must either mend their manners, or lose their dignities. On the other side when he saw how propense the common people inhabiting in the bordering Country of *Italy*, were to entertain these new opinions, he now thought it no time to dispute or perswade, but with speed repairs to the Senate, and procures authority from them unto *Spira*.

Spira by this time had conferred with himself of the nature of his courage, how evident and notorious it was, and a creature subject to be envyed by such, as neither liked his person nor Religion; he perceived that his opinions were neither retired nor speculative, but such as aimed at the overthrow of the Romish institution, and a change of policy, and that his courage wanted neither power nor occasion to call him to an answer in publick when he must either *Apostatize*, and shamefully give his former

mer life, yea, his own conscience the lie, or endure the utmost malice of his deadly enemies, or forsake his Wife, Children, Friends, Goods, Authority; yea, his dear Country, and betake himself to a forraign people, there to endure a thousand miseries, that do continually wait upon a voluntary exile. Being thus distracted, and tossed in the restlesse wayes of doubt, without guide to trust to, or heaven to fly to for succour: On the sudden, God's Spirit shifting, he felt a calm, and began to discourse with himself in this manner.

Why wanderest thou thus in uncertainties, unhappy man, cast away fear, put on thy shield, the shield of faith. Where is thy wonted courage, thy goodnesse, thy constancy? Remember that Christs glory lyes at the stake: Suffer thou without feare and he will defend thee, he will tell thee what thou shalt answer; he can beat down all danger, bring thee out of prison, raise thee from the dead; Consider Peter *in the dungeon, the Martyrs in the fire; if thou makest a good confession thou mayest indeed go to prison, or death, but an eternall reward in heaven remains for thee. Who hast thou in this world comparable to eternall life, to everlasting happinesse? If thou dost otherwise, think of the scandall* [illegible] *common people live by example, thinking whatever is done is well done;) fear the losse of peace and joy, fear hell, death, and eternall wrath, or if thy flesh be so strong*

strong, as to cause thee to doubt of the issue, fly thy Country, get thee away, though never so far, rather then deny the Lord of life.

Now was *Spira* in reasonable quiet, being resolved to yeeld to his weighty reasons, yet holding it wisdom to examine all things, he consults also with flesh and blood: Thus the battel doth renew, and the flesh begins in this manner: *Be well advised, fond man, consider reasons on both sides, and then judge: How canst thou then overween thine own sufficiency, as thou neither regardest the examples of thy Progenitors, nor the judgement of the whole Church? Dost thou not consider what misery this thy rashnesse will bring thee unto? thou shalt lose all thy substance, gotten with so great care and travel, thou shalt undergo to the most exquisite torments that malice it self can devise; thou shalt be counted an Heretick of all, and to close up all, thou shalt die shamefully. What thinkest thou of the loathsome, stinking dungeon, the bloody axe, the burning fagot? are they delightfull? Be wise at length, and keep thy life and honour, thou mayest live to do much good to good men as God commands thee; thou mayest be an ornament to thy Country, and put ease, the Countries losse would be of small esteem with thee: Wilt thou bring thy friends also into danger; thou hast begotten Children, wilt thou now cut their throats, and inhumanely butcher them, which may in time bring honour to their*

Coun

Countrie, glory to God, help and furtherance to his Church: Go to the Legate, weak man, freely confesse thy fault, and help all these miseries. Thus did the cares of this World and the deceitfulnesse of riches, choak the good seed that was formerly sown; So as fearing he faints, and yeelds unto the allurements of this present world, and being thus blinded, he goes to the Legat at *Venice*, and salutes him with this news.

Having for these divers years entertained an opinion concerning some Articles of Faith, contrary to the Orthodox, and received judgement of the Church; and uttered many things against the authority of the Church of Rome *and the universall Bishop. I humbly acknowledge my fault and error, and my folly in misleading others: I therefore yeeld my self in all obedience, to the supream Bishop, into the bosome of the Church of* Rome *never to depart again from the traditions and decrees of the holy See. I am heartily sorry for what is past, and I humbly beg pardon for so great an offence.*

The Legat perceiving *Spira* to faint, he pursues him to the utmust; he causes a recitation of all the errors to be drawn in writing, together with his confession annexed to it, and commands *Spira*, to subscribe his name there, which accordingly he did: Then the Legat commands him to return to his own Town, and there to declare this confession of his, and to acknowledge

ledge the whole Doctrine of the Church of *Rome* to be holy, and true: and to abjure the opinions of *Luther*, and other such Teachers, as false, and Heretical: *Man knows the beginning of sin, but who bounds the issue thereof?* *Spira* having once lost footing, goes down a main, he cannot stay, nor gain-say the *Legat*: but promiseth to accomplish his whole will and pleasure; He soon addresseth himself for his Journey, and being onward in the way, he thinks himself of the large spoils he had brought away from the conflict with the Legat, what glorious testimony he had given of his great faith, and constancy in Christ's cause: and to be plain, how impiously he had denyed Christ, and his Gospel at *Venice*, and what he promised to do further in his own Countrey: And thus: partly with fear, and partly with shame, being confounded, he thought he heard a voice speaking unto him, in this manner.

Spira, What dost thou here? whither goest thou? hast thou, unhappy man, given thy hand-writing to the Legate at *Venice*? yet see thou dost not seal it in thy own Countrey. Dost thou indeed think eternall life so mean, as that thou preferrest this present life before it? Dost thou well in preferring Wife and Children before Christ? Is the windy applause of the people better indeed, then the glory of God, and the possessions of this worlds good more

dear

dear to thee then the salvation of thy own soul? Is the small ute of a moment of time more desirable then eternall wrath is dreadfull? Think with thy self what Christ endured for thy sake; is it not equall thou shouldest suffer somewhat for him? Remember, man, that the sufferings of this present life are not comparable to the glory that shall be revealed. If thou sufferest with him, thou shalt also reign with him. Thou canst not answer for what thou hast already done; nevertheless, the gate of mercy is not quite shut; take heed that thou heapest not sin upon sin, least thou repent when it will be too late.

Now was *Spira* in a wilderness of doubt, not knowing which way to turn him, nor what to do, yet being arrived in his own Countrey, and amongst his friends, what he had done, and what he had further promised to do, and how the terror of God on the one side, and the terror of this world on the other side, did continually rack him; and therefore he desired of them advice in this so doubtfull a case: his friends upon small deliberation answered, that it was requisite he should take heed that he did not in any way betray his Wife and Children, and all his friends into danger, seing, that by so small a matter as the reciting of a little Schedule, which might be done in less space then half an hour, he might both free himself from present

danger, and preserve many that depend upon him; adding moreover, that he could get no credit in relenting from that which he had already in greatest part performed before the Legat at *Venice*, and that in the perfect accomplishing thereof, little or no discredit could arise, more then what by the former action already he had sustained; on the other side, if he did not perform his promise made to the Legat, he could neither discharge himself of the shame which he had already incurred, nor avoid far more heavy and insupportable injuries, then probably he should have indured, if he had persisted obstinately in his former opinions.

This was the last blow of the battel; and *Spira* utterly overcome, goes to the Prætor, and profers to perform his promise made to the Legat, who in the mean time had taken order to have all things ready, and had sent the instrument of abjuration signed by *Spira* to the Prætor, by the hands of a certain Priest. All that night the miserable man wares out with restless cares, without any minute of rest; the next morning being come, he gets up, and being ready, he desperately enters into the publick Congregation, where Masse being finished, in the presence of friends and enemies, and of the whole Assembly; being by estimation near two thousand people; yea, and of Heaven it self, he recites that infamous abjuration, word for word as

as it was written; it being done he was fined at thirty pieces of gold, which he presently payed, five whereof were given to the Priest that brought the abjuration, the other twenty five were imployed towards the making of a shrin to put the Eucharist in; then was he sent home, restored to his Dignities, Goods, Wife and Children: No sooner was he departed, but he thought he heard a direfull voice saying unto him, Thou wicked wretch, thou hast denyed me, thou hast renounced the Covenant of thy obedience, thou hast broken thy vow, hence Apostate, bear with thee the sentence of thy eternall damnation: He trembling and quaking in body and minde, fell down in a swound; relief was at hand for the body, but from that time foreward he never found any peace or ease of minde, but continually in unceasant torments: He professed that he was captived under the revenging hand of the great God; that he heard continually that fearfull sentence of Christ, that just Judge, that he knew he was utterly undone, that he could neither hope for grace nor Christs intercession with God the Father in his behalf. Thus was his fault ever heavy on his heart, and ever his judgement before his eyes.

Now began his friends, some of them, to repent too late of their rash counsell; others not looking so high as the judgement of God, laid all the blame upon his melancholick constituti-

on; that overshadowing his judgment, wrought in him a kind of madnesse, every one censured, as his fancy led him, yet for remedy all agreed in this, to use both the wholsome help of Physicians, and the pious advice of Divines: and therefore thought it meet to convey him to *Padua*, an University of note, where plenty of all means was to be had; this they accordingly did, both with Wife, Children and whole family: others also of his friends accompanying him; and being arrived at the house of one *James Ardin*, in Saint *Leonards* Parish, they sent for three Physicians of most note, who upon due observation of the effects, and of other Symptomes of his disease, & some privat conference one with another amongst themselves, returned their verdict in this manner, *viz.* That they could not discern that his body was afflicted with any danger or distemper originally from it self, by reason of the over-ruling of any humour, but that this Malady of his did arise from some grief, or passion of his mind, which being overburdened, did so oppresse the spirits, as they wanting free passage, stirred up many ill humours, whereof the body of man is full, and these ascending up into the brain troubled the fancy, shadowed the seat of the Judgement, and so corrupted it: this was the state of his disease, and that outward part that was visible to the eye of nature: this they endeavoured to reform

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by purgation, either to consume, or at least to divert the course of these humours from the brain, but all their skill effected nothing, which Spira noting, said, *Alace, poor men, how far wide are you? do you think that this disease is to be cured by Potions? believe me there must be another manner of medicine, it is neither Plasters, nor Drugs that can help a fainting soul cast down with sense of sin, and the wrath of God; 'tis only Christ that must be the Physician, and the Gospel the soules Antidote.*

The Physicians easily believed him after they had understood the whole truth of the matter, and therefore they wished him to seek some spirituall comfort. By this time the fame of this man was spred over all *Padua*, and the neighbour Countrey, partly for that he was a man of esteem, partly as of the disease, so the occasion was especially remarkable, for this was not done in a corner; so as daily there came multitudes of all sorts to see him, some out of curiosity, only to see and discourse, some out of a pious desire to try all means that might reduce him to comfort again; or at least to benefite themselves by such a spectacle of misery, and of the justice of God. Amongst these *Paulus Vergerius*, Bishop of *Justinopolis*, and *Matthaeus Gribaldus* deserve especially to be named as the most principall labourers for this mans comfort. They find him now about fifty years of age,

neither

neither affected with the dotage of old age, nor with the unconstant head strong passion of youth, but in the strength of his experience and judgement: in a burning heat, calling excessively for drink; yet his understanding active, quick of apprehension, witty in discourse, above his ordinary manner, and judiciously oppolite; his friends laboured him by all fair means to receive some nourishment, which he obstinately gain-saying, they forcibly infused some liquid sustenance into his mouth, most of which he spit out again; exceedingly chafing, and in this fretting mood of his, said; As it is true, *that all things worke for the best to those that love God*, so to the wicked all are contrary; *for whereas a plentifull off-spring is the blessing of God, and his reward being a stay to the weak estate of their aged parents, to me they are a cause of bitternesse and vexation; they do strive to make me tire out this misery: I would fain be at an end, I deserve not this dealing at their hands: Oh! that I were gone from hence, that some body would let out this weary soul.*

His friends salured him, and asked him, what he conceived to be the cause of his disease; forthwith he breake out into a lamentable discourse of the passages formerly related, and that with such passionate elocution, that he caused many to weep, and most to tremble. They contrarily, to comfort him, propounded many

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of Gods promises recorded in the Scripture, and many examples of Gods mercy: *My sin* (said he) *is greater then then the mercy of God.* Nay, answered they, the mercy of God is above all sin: God would have all men to be saved: *It is true* (quoth he) *he would have all that he hath elected to be saved; He will not have damned reprobates to be saved; I am one of that number; I know it, for I willingly and against my knowledge denyed Christ, and I feel that He hardens, and will not suffer me to hope.*

After some silence, one asked him whether he did not believe that Doctrine to be true, for which he was accused before the Legat? he answered; *I did believe it when I denyed it, but now I neither believe that, nor the doctrine of the Romish Church: I believe nothing, I have no faith, no trust, no hope: I am a reprobate like* Cain *or* Judas, *who casting away all hope of mercy, fell into despair, and my friends do me great wrong, that they suffer me not to go to the place of unbelievers, as I justly deserve.*

Here they began sharply to rebuke him; requiring, and charging him that in any wayes he did not violat the mercy of God; to which he answered; 'The mercy of God is exceeding large, 'and extends to all the elect, but not to me, or 'any like to me, who are sealed up to wrath, I tell 'you I deserve it, my own conscience condemns 'me: What needeth any other Judge? Christ

came (said they) to take away sin, *Romans* 2. 14. and calling for a book, they read unto him the passion of Christ, and coming to his nailing to the Crosse, *Spira* said, "This indeed is "comfortable to such as are elected, but as for me "wretch, they are nothing but grief and torment "because I concemned them. This roaring for grief, and rolling himself up and down upon the bed as he lay, he entreated them to read no more; As *Gribaldus* was coming to see him, *Vergerius* said to *Spira*, dear Sir, here is Doctor *Gribaldus*, a godly and faithfull friend of yours, come to see you: "He is welcome, said "he, but he shall find me ill: *Gribaldus* replyed, Sir, this is but an illusion of the devil, who doth what he can to vex you; but turn you to God with your whole heart, and he is ready to show you mercy: The Lord you know is full of mercy, it is he that hath said, that *as often as a sinner repents of his sin, He will remember his sins no more.* Consider this in the example of *Peter*, that was Christs familiar, and an Apostle, and yet denyed him thrice with an oath, and yet God was mercifull unto him; Consider the Thief that spent his whole life in wickednesse, and for all that did not God graciously respect him in the last minut of his life? Is the Lords hand now shortned, that it cannot save? To this *Spira* answered; "If *Peter* grieved and "repented, it was because Christ beheld him with

with a merciſull eye, and in that he was pardoned, it was not becauſe he wept, but becauſe God was gracious to him; but God reſpects not me, and therefore I am a reprobate, I feel no comfort can enter into my heart, there is place there but only for torments, and vexings of ſpirit: I tell you my caſe is properly my own, no man was ever in the like plight, and therefore my eſtate is fearfull.

Then roaring out in the bitterneſſe of his ſpirit, ſaid, *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*: the violence of his paſſion and action ſurable, did amaze many of the beholders; inſomuch as ſome of them ſaid with a whiſpering voice, that he was poſſeſſed, he over hearing it, ſaid, "Do ye doubt it? I have "a whole Legion of Devils that take up their "dwelling within me, and poſſeſſe me as their "own, and juſtly too, for I have denyed Chriſt. Whether did you that willingly or not? (ſaid they) "That's nothing to the purpoſe (ſaid *Spira*) Chriſt ſaith, *Whoſoever denies me before men, him will I deny before my Father which is in Heaven: Chriſt will not be denyed, no not in a word, and therefore it is enough, though in heart I never denyed him.*

They obſerving his diſtemper to ariſe from the ſenſe and horrour of the pains of hell, asked whether he thoght there were worſe pains then what he endured for the preſent, he ſaid "I "knew there were far worſe pains then theſe that

'he then suffered, for the wicked shal rise to 'their Judgement, but they shall not stand in 'Judgement, *Psal.* 1. This I tremble to think 'of, yet do I desire nothing more then that I 'might come to that place where I may be sure 'to feel the worst, and to be freed from fear of 'worse to come.

I, but you are to consider (said one) that those opinions for which you were accused before the Legat, were impious, and therefore you are not to think you denyed Christ, but rather that you confessed him, acknowledging the infallible truth of the Catholick Church. "Truly (said he) when I did deny those opinions, I did think them to be true, and yet I did deny them.

Go to (said others) now then, believe that they are true. "Now I cannot (said he) God 'will not suffer me to believe them, nor trust in 'his mercy. What would you have me to do? 'I would fain attain to this power, but cannot 'though I should presently be burnt for it. But why do you (said the other) esteem this so grievous a sin, when as the learned Legat constrained you to it, which he surely would not have done if your former opinions had not been erroneous; no, good *Francis*, the devil besets thee, let not therefore the grievousnesse of thy sin (if any such be) amaze thee. "You say 'right, replyed he, the devil hath possest me and 'God hath left me to his power, for I find I can 'neither

'ther believe the Gospel nor trust in Gods mer-
'cy. I have sinned against the holy Ghost, and
'God by his immutable decree hath bound me
'over to perpetual punishment, without any
'hope of pardon. It is true that the greatnesse
'of sin, or the multitude of them, not binds Gods
'mercy, all those sins that in the former part of
'my life I have committed, then did not so
'much trouble me, for I trusted God would not
'lay them to my charge. Now having sinned
'against the holy Ghost, God hath taken away
'from me all power of repentance, and brings all
'my sins to remembrance, and guilty of one,
'guilty of all. And therefore it is no matter
'whether my sins be great or small, few or ma-
'ny: They be such, as Christs blood, nor Gods
'mercy belongs not to me. God will have mercy
'on whom he will have mercy; & whom he will
'he hardneth: This is it that gnawes my heart,
'he hath hardned me, and I find that he daily
'more and more doth harden me, and therefore
'I am out of hope: I feel it, therefore cannot
'but despair. I tell you there was never such a
'monster as I am, never was any man alive a
'spectacle of exceeding misery. I knew that ju-
'stification is to be expected by Christ, and I
'denyed and abjured it to the end I might keep
'this frail life from adversity, and my Children
'from poverty; and now behold how bitter this
'life is to me, and God only knows what shall
'become of this my family; but sure no good is

likely to betide it, but worse and worse? and such a raine at length as one stone shall not be left upon another. But why should you (said *Gribaldus*) conceit so deeply of your sin, seing you cannot but know that many have denyed Christ, yet never fell into despair? Well said he, I can see no ground of comfort for such, neither can I warrant them from Gods revenging hand in wrath; though it pleaseth God yet to suffer such to be in peace; and besides, there will a time of danger come, and then they shall be throughly tryed, and if it were not so, yet God is just in making me an example to others: And I cannot justly complain, there is no punishment so great but I have deserved it, for this so heinous offence: I assure you it is no small matter to deny Christ, and yet it is more ordinary then comonly men do conceive of; it is not a denial made before a Magistrate, only is with me, for as often as a Christian doth dissemble the known truth; as often as he approves of false worship, by presenting himself at it, so often as he hath not things worthy of his calling, or such things as are unworthy of his calling, so often he denies Christ; thus did I, and therefore am justly punished for it. Your estate (quoth *Gribaldus*) is not so strange as you make it. *Job* was so far gone that he complained God had set him as a mark against him, and *David* that was a man after Gods own heart, complained often that God had forsaken him, and

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and was become his enemy, yet both received comfort again. Comfort your self therefore, God will come at length, though he now seem far off.

O Brother (answered *Spira*) *I believe all this, the Devils believe and tremble; but David was ever elected and dearly beloved of God; and though he fell, yet God took not utterly away His holy Spirit, and therefore was heard when he prayed,* Lord take not thy holy Spirit from me; *but I am in another case, being ever accursed from the presence of God; neither can I pray as he did, because his holy Spirit is quite gone, and cannot be recalled; and therefore I know I shall live in continual harnesse so long as I live. Oh that I might feel but the least sense of the love of God to me, though but for one small moment, as I now feel his heavy wrath that burns like the torments of hell within me, and afflicts my conscience with pangs unutterable: Verily desperation is hell it self.*

Here *Gribauldus* said, I do verily believe, *Spira*, that God having so severely chastised you in this life, correcteth you in mercy here, that He may spare you hereafter, and that he hath mercy sealed up for you in time to come.

Nay (said *Spira*) *hence do I know that I am a reprobate, because he afflicteth me with hardnesse of heart. O that my body had suffered all my life long, so that he would be pleased to release my soul and ease my conscience, this burdened conscience.*

Gribauldus being desirous to ease his mind from

from the continual meditation of his sins, as also to sound how for the present he stood affected to the Romish Church; asked him what he thought became of the souls of men so soon as they departed out of the body; to which he answered.

Although this be not so fully revealed in Scripture, yet I verily believe that the souls of the Elect go presently to the Kingdom of glory, and not that they sleep with the body, as some do imagine.

Very well, said one of the spectators, why do the Scriptures then say that God brings down to hell and riseth up, seing it cannot be meant of the estate of the soul after death, 1 *Sam.* 5. 9. Which as thou sayest, either goeth to heaven without change, or to hell without redemption; it must be understood of the estate of the soul in this life. Like that wherein thou art at this present and oftentimes we see that God suffers men to fall into jawes of despair, and yet raiseth them up again; and therefore despair not but hope; it shall be even thus with thee in his good time.

This is the work (quoth *Spira*) *this is the labour: for I tell you, when I at* Venice *did first adjure my profession, and so as it were drew an Indenture, the spirit of God often admonished me, and when at* Cittadella *I did as it were set to my seal. the Spirit of God often suggested to me, do not write,* Spira *do not seal; yet I resisted the holy Ghost and did both: And at that very present I did exterently feel a wound inflicted in my very*

will

will: So although I can say I would believe, yet can I not say I will believe. God hath denied me the power of will, and it befalls me in this my miserable estate, as with one that is fast in irons, and his friends coming to see him, do pittie his estate, and do perswade him to shake off his fetters, and to come out of his bonds, which God knows, he would fain do, but cannot; this is my very case, you perswade me to believe, how fain would I do it, but cannot? O now I cannot. Then violently grasping his hands together, and raising himself up, *Behold* (said he) *I am strong, yet by little and little I decay and consume, and my servants would fain preserve this weary life, but at length the will of God must be done, and I shall perish miserably, as I deserve. Rejoice ye Righteous in the Lord; blessed are you whose hearts the Lord hath mollified.*

Then after some pause; "It is wonderfull, I 'earnestly desire to pray to God with my heart, 'yet I cannot; I see my damnation, and I know 'my remedy is only in Christ, yet I cannot set 'my self to hold on it; such are the punishments 'of the damned; they confess what I confess, they 'repent of their losse of Heaven; they cannot 'mend their wayes.

As he was thus speaking, he observed divers Flies that came about him, and some lighted on him; "Behold, said he, now also *Belzebub* come 'to his banquet; you shall shortly see my end, 'and in me an example to many, of the justice and judgement of God.

About

About this time came unto two Bishops, with divers Schollars of the University, one of them being *Paulus Vergerius*, having observed *Spira* more then any other, being continually conversant with him: told him his estate was such as rather stood in need of prayer then advice, and therefore desired him to pray with them in the Lords prayer: *Spira* consented, and he began.

[Our Father which art in Heaven] then breaking forth into tears he stopped, but they said, It is well, your grief is a good sign. "I bewail, (said he) my misery, for I perceive I am forsaken of God and cannot call to him from my heart as I was wont to do; yet let us go on, said *Vergerius*.

[Thy Kingdom come] O Lord (said Spira) bring me also into this kingdom; I beseech thee shut me not out. Then coming to those words [Give us this day our daily bread] he added; "O Lord I have enough and abundance "to feed this carcasse of mine; but there is another bread I humbly beg the bread of thy grace, "without which I know I am but a dead man.

[Lead us not into temptation] saith Lord "that I am brought into temptation, help me "Lord that I may escape; the enemy hath overcome, help me I beseech thee to overcome this "cruel tyrant.

Those words he spake with a mournfull voice, the tears trickling down abundantly; and expressing such affections and passion, as turned the

the bowels of those there present, with grief and compunction; they then turning to *Spira*, said, You know that none can call Christ Jesus the Lord but by the holy Ghost: you must therefore think of your self, according to that soft affection which you expresse in your prayers, interring thereby that God hath not wholly cast you off, or bereaved you of his Spirit utterly.

"I perceive, said *Spira*, that I call on him 'to my eternall damnation, for I tell you again, 'it is a new and unheard of example that you 'find in me: If *Judas* (said they) had but out-lived his dayes, which by nature he might have done, he might have repented, and Christ would have received him to mercy, and yet he sinned most grievously against his Master which did so esteem of him, as to honour him with the dignity of an Apostle, and did maintain and feed him: He answered. "Christ did also feed and 'honour me, neither yet is my fault one jot lesse 'then that of his, because it is no more honour to 'be personally present with Christ in the flesh, 'then to be in his presence now by illumination 'of his holy Spirit: And besides, I deny that ever *Judas* could have repented, how long soever 'he had lived; for grace was quite taken from 'him, as it is now from me.

O *Spira*, said they, you know you are in a spiritual desertion, you must therefore not believe what Satan suggests, he was ever a liar from the beginning, and a meer impostor, and will cast

cast a thousand lying fancies into your mind, to beguile you withall; you must rather believe those whom you judge to be in a good estate, and more able to discern of you than your self: believe us, and we tell you that God will be mercifull unto you.

Oh, here is the knot, said *Spira*, *I would I could believe, but* I *cannot.*

Then he began to reckon up what fearful dreams and visions he was continually troubled withall; that he saw the devils coming flocking into the Chamber, and about his bed, terrifying him with strange noises, that these were not fancies, but that he saw them as really as the standers by; and that besides these outward terrors, he felt continually a racking torture of his mind, and a continuall butchery of his conscience, being the very proper pangs of the damned in hell.

Cast away these fancies said *Gribaldus*, these are but illusions; humble your self in the presence of God, and praise him. "The dead 'praise not the Lord, answered he, nor they that 'go down into the pit; we that are drowned in 'despair are dead, and already gone down into 'the pit: What hell can there be worse than des'paration, or what greater punishment? the 'gnawing worm, unquenchable fire, horror, 'confusion, and (which is worst of all) desperation 'it self continually torrures me; and now I count 'my present estate worse, than if my soul were

'separated

'red from my body, were with *Judas* and the 'reſt of the damned: and therefore now deſire 'rather to be there then thus to live in the body.

One being preſent, repeated certain words out of the Pſalmes; *If thy Children forſake my Law, and walk not in my judgements, I will viſit their tranſgreſſions with rods, and their iniquity with ſtripes: Nevertheleſſe, my loving kindneſſe will I not utterly take from them, nor ſuffer my faithfulneſſe to fail,* Mark this, O *Spira, my Covenant I will not break.*

'Theſe promiſes, ſaid *Spira*, belong only to 'the elect which is tempted; many fall into ſin, 'but are again lifted up and recovered out: As 'the Prophet ſaith, *Though he fall, he ſhall not 'be utterly caſt down, for the Lord upholdeth him*: 'therefore *Peter* could riſe for he was elected; 'but the reprobats when they fall cannot riſe a-'gain, as appears in *Cain, Saul* and *Judas*: God 'deals one way with the elect, and another with 'reprobates.

The next day he prayed with them in the Latine tongue, and that with excellent affection, as outwardly appeared. Bleſſed be God, ſaid *Vergerius*, theſe are no ſigns of eternall reprobation; you muſt not, O *Spira*, ſeek out the ſecret counſels of Gods election and reprobation; for no man can know, ſo long as he lives, whether by his good or bad deeds, he be worthy of Gods love or anger: Do ye not know that the Prophet *David* complained that God had caſt off his ſoul?

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I know all this, quoth Spira, I know the mercies of God are infinit, and do surpasse the sins of the whole world, and that they are effectuall to all that believe, but this faith, and this hope is the gift of God; O that he would give it me! But it is as impossible as to drink up the Sea at a draught. As for that of Solomon, if he had ever tryed that which I feel by mo∫t experience, he would never have ∫poken as he did; But the truth is, never had mortall man ∫uch an evident experience of Gods anger and hatred againſt him as I have. You that are in good eſtate, think repentance and faith to be a work of great felicity: And therefore you think it an eaſie matter to perſwade a man to believe; The whole need not the Phyſician and he that is well can ſoon give counſell to ſuch as are ill. But this is the hell to me, my heart is hardned, I cannot believe: Many are called but few are choſen.

Upon what ground, ſaid they, do you conceive ſo ill an opinion of your ſelf?

'I once did know God to be my Father, not 'only by creation, but by regeneration; I knew 'him by his beloved Son the Author and fini'ſher of our ſalvation; I could pray to him and 'hope for pardon of ſins from him; had I a taſte 'of his ſweetneſſe, peace and comfort; now con'trarily, I know God not as a Father, but as an 'enemy: What more? my heart hates God, and 'ſeeks to get above him, I have nothing elſe to 'flie to but terror and deſpair.

It's like you think, ſaid they, that thoſe who have

have the earnest and first fruits of Gods Spirit may notwithstanding fall away.

"The judgements of God are a deep abyss, "said he, we are soon drowned if we enter into "them; he that thinks he standeth let him take "heed lest he fall: As for my self I know I am "fallen back, and that I once did know the truth, though it may not be so throughly; I know not what to say, but that I am one of that number which God hath threatned to tear in peices.

Say not so, answered they, for God may come though at the last hour: keep hold therefore at the least by hope.

"This, quoth he, is my case, I tell you I "cannot, God hath deprived me of hope, this brings terror to my mind, and puts this body which now is so weak as cannot perform the several offices thereof: For as the elect hath the Spirit testifying that they are the sons of God, so the reprobates, ever while they live do often feel a worm in their conscience, whereby they are condemned already; And therefore, as I perceived, this wound inflicted on my mind and will, I know that I wanted the gifts of saving grace, and that I was utterly undone. God chastneth his Children with temporary afflictions, that they may come as gold out of the fire, but punisheth the wicked with blindness in their understandings and hardnesse of heart; and woe be to such from whom God taketh his holy Spirit.

Here one rebuked him, and told him he gave

too

too much credit to sense, that he was not to believe himself, but rather him that was in a good estate: And I testifie to you, said he, that God will be mercifull to you.

"Nay, said he, for because I am in this ill 'estate, therefore I can believe nothing but what is contrary to my salvation and comfort; but you that are so confident of your good estate, look that it be true; for it is no such small matter to be assured of sincerity; a man had need be exceeding strongly grounded in the truth befor he can be able to affirm such a matter as you now do. It is not the performances of a few outward duties, but a mighty constant labour with intention of heart and affection, with all full desire and endeavour continually to set forth Gods glory; there must be neither fear of Legators, Inquisitors, Prison, nor any death whatsoever; Many think themselves happy that are not: *It is not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, that shall go to Heaven.*

They came another day, and found him with his eyes shut, as if he had been drowsie and very loath to discourse; at which time there came in also a grave man from *Cittadella*, who demanded of *Spira* if he knew him or not. He lifting up his eye-lids, and not suddenly remembring him, the man said to him, I am *Presbyter Anthony Fontamia*, I was with you at *Venice* some eight weeks since. "O cursed day, siad '*Spira*! O cursed day! Oh that I had never

'gone

gone thither! Would God I had then dyed.

Afterwards came in a Prieſt, called *Bernardinus Sardonius*, bringing with him a Book of Exorciſms to conjure this devil, whom when *Spira* ſaw, ſhaking his head, he ſaid, "I am verily perſwaded, indeed, that God hath left me 'to the power of the devil; but ſuch they are as 'are not to be found in your Letany; neither 'will they be caſt out by ſpells. The Prieſt proceeding in his intended purpoſe, with a ſtrange uncouth geſture, and a loud voice, adjured the ſpirit to come into *Spira*'s tongue, and to anſwer: *Spira* deriding his fruitleſſe labour, with a ſigh, turned from him. A Biſhop being there preſent, ſaid to *Spira*, Brother, God hath put vertue into the Word and Sacraments, and we have uſed the one means, and find not that effect which we deſire; ſhal we try the efficacy of the Sacrament? Surely, if you take it as a true Chriſtian ought to receive the body and blood of Chriſt, it will prove a ſoveraign medicine for your ſick ſoul.

"This I cannot do, anſwered he, for they that have no right to the promiſes, have no right to the ſeals. The Euchariſt was appointed only for Believers, if we have not faith, we eat and drink judgement to our ſelves: I received it about a month ſince, but I did not well in ſo doing, for I took it by conſtraint, and ſo I took it to my deeper condemnation.

Here *Vergerius* began to importune him earneſtly

nestly to beware that he did not wilfully resist grace, and put himself out of Heaven, charging him vehemently, by all the love that was between them, by the love that he bare to his Children; yea, to his own soul, that he would set himself seriously to return to that Faith and hope which once he had in the death of Christ: With many such like words, *Spira* having heard much of the like matter formerly, and being somewhat moved, said, "You do but repeat, *Vergerius*, why should I hope? why should I believe? God hath taken faith from me; shew me then whither I shal go, shew me a Haven whereto I shall retire. You tell me of Gods mercy, whenas God hath cast me off; you tel me of Christs intercession, I have denied him; you command me to believe, I say I cannot; you bring me no comfort; your command is as impossible for me to obey as to keep the Moral Law. If you should perswade one to love God with all his heart, soul and strength, and God gives him no power, can he perform your desire? Do not the Church teach us to sing, direct us, O Lord, to love thy commandments? hypocries say that they love God with all their heart, but they lie; for my part I will not lie but tell you plainly, such is my case, that though you should never so much importune me to hope or believe, though I desire, yet I cannot, for God as a punishment of my wickedness hath taken away from me all his saving graces, faith, hope and all;

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I am not the man therefore that you take me for; it's like you think I delight in this estate, if I could conceive but y least spark of hope of a better estate hereafter, I would not refuse to endure the heavy weight of the wrath of that great God, yea, for twenty thousand years, to that I might at lenth attain to y end of that misery, which I now know will be eternall: But I tell you my will is wound, who longs more to believe then I do? but all y ground work of hope is gone, for if the testimonies of holy Scripture be true (as they are certainly true) is not this as true, *Whosoever denies me before men, him*, saith Christ, *will I deny before my Father which is in heaven*, is not this justly my case as if it had been intended against this very person of mine? And I pray you, what shall become of such as Christ denyeth, seing there is no other Name under heaven whereby you look to be saved? What saith St. *Paul* to the *Hebrews*? *It is impossible for those who were once enlightned, and have tasted of the heavenly gift & were partakers of the holy Ghost, if they fall away, to be renewed to repentance.* What can be more plain against me? Is not that Scripture also: If we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a looking for of judgment; the Scripture speaks of me. St. *Paul* meets me, St. *Peter* tells me, *It had been better I had never known the way of righteousness, then after I have known, to return from the holy Commandments, it had been better I had not known, and yet then my con-*

damnation had been most certain. Do you not see evidently, that I have wilfully denyed the known truth: I may justly expect not only damnation, but worse if worse may be imagined. God will have me undergo the just punishment of my sin, and make me an example of his wrath for your sakes.

The company present admired his discourse, so grievously accusing himself of his fore-past life, so gravely & wisely relating concerning the judgements of God, that they then were convinced, that it was not frenzy or madnesse that had possessed him, and being as it were in admiration of his estate, *Spira* proceeded again in this manner.

'Take heed to your selves, it is no light or easie matter to be a Christian, it is not Baptism, or reading of the Scripture, or boasting of faith in Christ, though even these are good, that can prove one to be an absolute Christian: You know what I said before, there must be a conformity in life. A Christian must be strong, unconquerable, not carrying an absolute profession, but resolute; expressing the image of Christ, and holding out against all opposition to the last breath, he must give all diligence by righteousnes and holines to make his calling and election sure: Many they are that snatch at the promises in ỹ Gospel, as if they undoubtedly did belong to them, and yet they remain sluggish, and careless, and being flattered by the things of this present world, they passe on their course in quietnesse and security, as if they were ỹ only happy men: whom nevertheless the

Lord

Lord in his providence hath ordained to eternal wrath; as you may see in St. *Lukes* rich Man. Thus it was with me, therefore take ye heed.

Then came one of his Nephews, and offered him some sustenance, which he disdainfully refusing, so moved the young mans choler, that he charged him with hypocrisie and dissimulation, of frenzy; to whom *Spira* gravely answering, said,

You may interpret the matter as you will, but I am sure I am not only the Actor, but the Argument and matter of the Tragedy: I would it were frenzie either fained or true, for if it were frenzie I could put it off at pleasure; if it were a real frenzie, yet there were some hope left of Gods mercy, where as now there is none. For I knew God hath pronounced me an enemy, and guilty of high treason against his Majesty. I am a cast away, a vessell of wrath, yet dar you call it dissembling and frenzie, and can mock at the formidable example of the heavy wrath of God, that should teach you fear and terror: But it is naturall to the flesh, either out of malice or ignorance, to speak perversly of the works of God. The naturall man discerneth not of the things that are of God, because they are spiritually discerned.

How can this be, said *Gribauldus*, that you can thus excellently discourse of the judgments of God, and of the graces of His holy Spirit that you find the want of them, and earnestly desire them, and yet you think you are utterly deprived of them.

Take this for certain, saith he, *want the main grace of all, and that which is absolutely necessary, and God*

doth many times extort most true and strange testimonies of his Majesty, justice and mercie; yea, out of the mouths of very reprobats: for even Judas after he had betrayed his Master, was constrained to confesse his sin, and to justifie the innocencie of Christ; and therefore if I do the like, it is no new or strange matter. God hath taken faith from me, and left me other common gifts for my deeper condemnation: By how much the more I remember what I had, and hear others discourse of what they have, by so much the more is my torment, in that I know what I want, and how there is no way to be relieved.

Thus spake he, the tears all the while trickling down, professing that his pangs were such, as that the damned weighs in hell endure nothing like mine: that his estate was worse then that of *Cainen* or *Judas*, and therefore he desired to die. *Yet behold* (said he, *the Scripture are accomplish'd in me, they shall desire to die, and death shall flie from them.* And verily, he seemed exceedingly to fear, least his life should be drawn out to a longer threed; finding no ease or relief, ever and anon cryed out, *O miserable wrete', O miserable wretch*; then turning to the Company, he besought them in this maner.

"O Brethren! take a diligent heed to your life, "make more account of ye gifts of Gods Spirit then "I have done; learn to be ware by my misery: think "not you are allused Christians, because you un- "derstand something of the Gospel: take heed you "grow not secure on that ground, be constant and "immoveable in the maintenance of your profes- "or:

'on: Confeſſe even untill death, if you be called 'thereto: He that loveth father, mother, brother, 'ſiſter, ſons, daughters, kindred, houſes, lands, 'more then Chriſt, is not worthie of him.

Theſe words, ſaid they do not ſound like the words of a wicked reprobate.

'I do but here imitate, ſaid Spira, the rich Glut-'ton in the Goſpel, who though in hell yet was 'careful that his brethren ſhould not come to ỳ 'place of torment; And I ſay to you brethren take 'heed of this miſerable eſtate wherein I am.

Then turning himſelf to certain young men ỳ were preſent, he deſired them to conceive him a-right, "I do not ſpeak this to derogate from the 'certaintie of ſaving faith, and the promiſes of ỳ 'Goſpel, for they are moſt ſure: but take heed of relying on ỳ faith ỳ works not a holy & unblam-'able life, worthy of a Believer; credit me it will 'fail, I have tryed it, I preſumed I had gotten the 'right faith, I preached it to others, I had all pla-'ces of Scripture in memory that might ſupport 'it: I thought my ſelf ſure, and in the mean time 'living impiouſly and careleſly: Behold now the 'judgements of God have overtaken me, not to 'correction, but to condemnation: And now you 'would have me to believe, but it will not be for 'I feel too late ỳ good things belong only to ſuch 'as are good, whoſe ſins are covered with Chriſts 'death and blood, as with a vail, and guarded with 'his righteous merits from ỳ flood of Gods wrath, 'even as with a mighty wall, leaſt miſerable mor-

tals

'cale should be swallowed up with greatnesse of 'their sin; But as for me *I* have as it were wil-'fully with my hands pulled down this Rampire, 'behind which *I* might have rested in safety, and 'now are the swelling waters come even to my 'soul, and *I* am cast away.

One of his familiar friends chanced to say, that certainly he was overcome with melancholy, which being overheard, *Spira* answered.

Well, be it so, seeing you will needs have it so: thus also is Gods wrath manifested against me, in that he hath taken from me y use of mine understanding and reason, so as *I* can neither rightly esteem and judge of my distemper, nor hope of remedy. You see brethren what a dangerous thing it is, to stop or stay in things that concerns Gods glory; especially to dissemble upon any terms. What a fearfull thing is it to be near & almost a Christian? Never was the like example to this of mine, and therefore if you be wise, you will seriously consider thereof. O that God would let loose his hand from me, that it were with me now as in times past, I would scorn the threats of the most cruel tyrants, bear torments with invincible resolution, and glory in the outward profession of Christ till I were choaked in the flame, and my body consumed to ashes.

You say you are desperate, O *Spira*, said they, why then do you not strive w some weapons or other, violently to make an end of your life, as desperate men use to do? Let me have a sword said *Spira*.

Spira; Why what would you do with it, quoth they? "I cannot tell you, said he, what this mind would move me to upon occasion, nor what I would do.

They perceiving small effect of all this their labour, but rather that he grew worse. For to avoiding of concourse of people, for every day seldom fewer than twenty continued with him, & to stop the course of fame, which was continually blown abroad of him: they consults to carry him back again to his own Countrey; and those his friends that came to comfort him, began to take their leave of him; *Vergerius* among the rest, required that at their parting they might pray together with him; *Spira* hardly consented, and as unwillingly performed: For he said, "My heart is estranged from God, I cannot call him father from my heart all good motions are now quite gone, my heart is full of malediction, hatred and blasphemy against God; I find I grow more and more hardned in heart, and cannot stoop nor help my self; your prayers for me shall turn to your own benefite, they can do me no good.

Vergerius came to take his leave of him, whom *Spira* embracing, said, "Although I know that nothing can bring any benefit to me a reprobate, but that every thing shal tend to my deeper condemnation; yet I give you most hearty thanks for your kind office of love and good will, and the Lord return it unto you with a plentifull encrease of all good.

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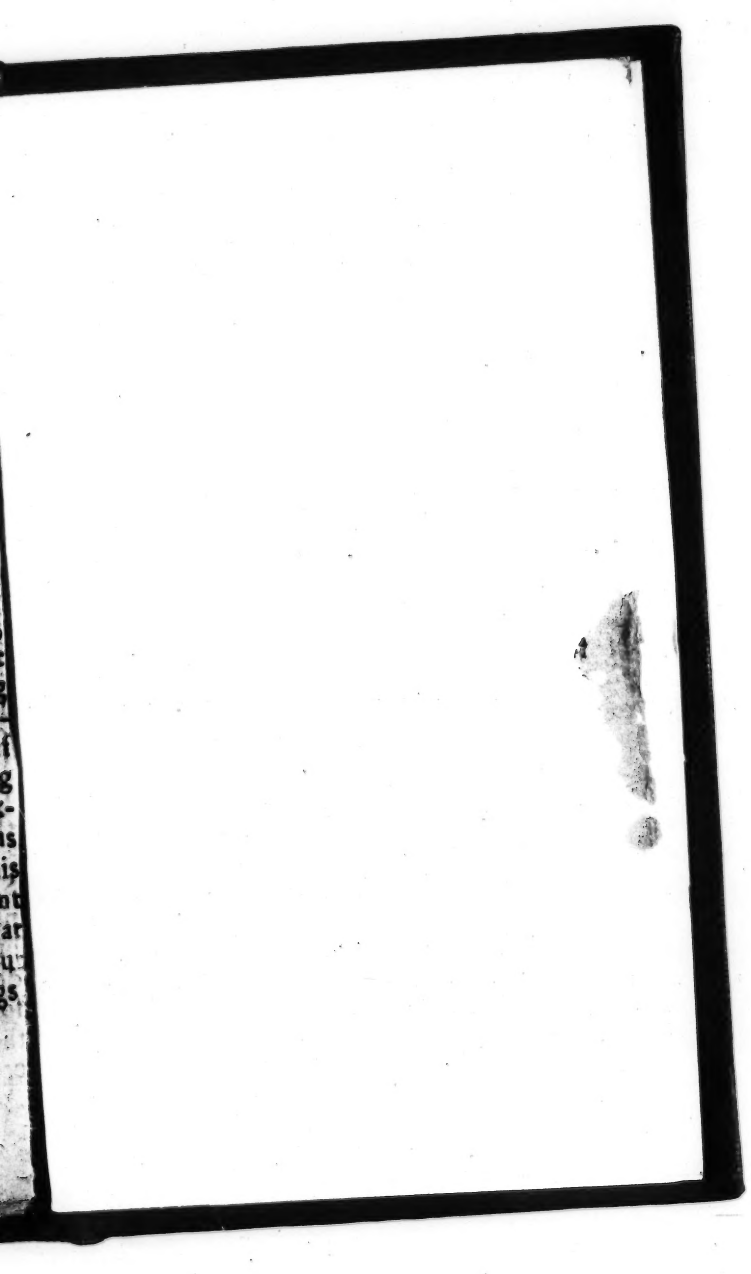
The next day being brought down to his intended journey, by y way, looking round about him with a ghastly look he saw a knife lying on a table to which he running hastily, snatched hold of, as intending to mischieve himself; but his friends laying hold of him, stopped him in his purpose: Whereupon with indignation he said, "I would I were above God, for I know he will have no mercy on me.

Thus went he homewards, often saying, that he envyed the condition of *Cain* and *Judas*. He lay about eight weeks in this case, in a continual burning, neither desiring, nor receiving any thing but by force and that without digestion, so spent, that he appeared a perfect Anatomy; expressing to the view nothing but sinews & bones; vehemently raging for drink, ever pining, yet fearfull to live long, dreadfull of hell, yet coveting death, in a continual torment, yet his own tormentor. And thus consuming himself with grief and horror, impatience and despair, like a living man in hell: He represented an extraordinary example of the justice and power of God. And thus (as far as appeareth) within a few dayes after his arrival at his own home, he departed this present life; yet an occation to make us remember that secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but charity to man, to teach him to hope all things.

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